

Religious Bigotry in Action

Catholics and the War
Modesty in Dress

The Catholic Mind

SEMI-MONTHLY

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Religious Bigotry in Action

An Attempt to Compel New Jersey Boards of Education to Obey the Constitution.

STEPHEN H. HORGAN

THE following letter, which appeared in *America* for March 3, 1917, is a striking example of the illegal and un-American discrimination that is taking place all over the United States. Religion as a bar to a teaching position was used against a member of the present writer's family, consequently he tried to prevent its recurrence, at least in New Jersey:

To the Editor of "America":

For those who maintain that bigotry is dead I should like to furnish an object lesson, taken from real life. Recently Miss Helen M. Connolly made application for the post of teacher in a school in Blackwood, N. J. Her appointment was forwarded to her by telegram during the afternoon of February 1, 1917, and read as follows:

MISS HELEN M. CONNOLLY,

347 North Washington St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Appointed to Blackwood Primary. Salary fifty. Wire acceptance immediately. Must be Protestant. Come at once.

J. F. RUSH.

Miss Connolly telegraphed the information that she was a Catholic. Early the next morning she received another telegram:

MISS HELEN CONNOLLY:

The Board will not elect a member of your denomination.

J. F. RUSH.

Miss Connolly might be an atheist, a Mormon, or an advocate of birth-control, and still be acceptable, but because she is a

faithful member of the Church established by Christ, she is rejected, and for that reason alone. We Catholics may support schools, public and private; pay taxes, municipal, State and national; our boys may, in the impending crisis as in the past, be called upon to follow the Stars and Stripes to victory or death; but our sisters may not teach at Blackwood because of the Rushes and other pestiferous weeds that flourish there and in other such bucolic localities, in which men sometimes fail to attain mental breadth and stature. It is unnecessary to go to Florida or Mexico for samples of religious intolerance, since it is rampant within sight of our nation's metropolis, and even beneath the shadow of the statue of liberty, which, it is presumed, "enlightens the world." We had better achieve tolerance at home before undertaking to preach it to the benighted at a distance. Well might the latter exclaim: "Physician, cure thyself!"

This has been Miss Connolly's third experience of an exactly similar nature within the past three months. The daughter of a workingman, her parents, at some sacrifice, have educated her. She holds a certificate of competence from one of our State normal schools, is a good girl in every respect, and is anxious to follow her chosen profession. Cannot some one of your numerous and influential readers aid her in finding employment? Her case should appeal forcibly to them. This deserving girl is being discriminated against because she is a Catholic. Those of her faith should therefore come to her relief. This letter is being written without her knowledge and, therefore, without solicitation on her part. It is written in indignant protest as well as with a view to ascertain whether we have the proper fraternal spirit.

Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

A. P. W.

The State Constitution of New Jersey, Article I, Section 4, makes the following provision: "No religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust; and no person shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil right merely on account of his religious principles." One would think that knowing this provision in the State Constitution, educators would never

ask questions about an applicant's religion, and furthermore, that when the attention of the Board of Education at Blackwood had been called to this violation of the Constitution, they would immediately show that they were law-abiding citizens by apologizing to Miss Connolly and giving her the position to which their supervising principal, Mr. J. F. Rush, had appointed her by telegram. But we have no record of any such action on their part.

With regard to Miss Connolly's case, Mr. Calvin N. Kendall, Commissioner of Education of New Jersey, was appealed to in the following letter:

Hon. CALVIN N. KENDALL, Commissioner of Education,
Trenton, N. J.

Dear Mr. Kendall: Enclosed please find a statement (clipping from *America*) that Miss Helen Connolly was refused a position as teacher at Blackwood, N. J., because she was a Catholic. I know of the same objection being made in Glen Ridge, in Essex County.

Would it be inconsistent with your position as Commissioner of Education to inform the Board of Education at Blackwood that the State Constitution, Article I, Section 4, orders: "No religious test shall be required as a qualification for any public office or trust," etc.

It does seem strange that those selected to look after educational affairs should be unacquainted with the Constitution of our State. I am a Southerner, ashamed of the narrow, bigoted spirit of my old South, but more shocked when I find it in my adopted State.

Believe me, sincerely yours,
Orange, N. J., March 1, 1917. STEPHEN H. HORGAN.

Commissioner Kendall turned the matter over to his assistant who forwarded the Board of Education at Blackwood the following letter:

To the Board of Education of Gloucester township, Camden county, N. J., care of Joseph E. Mathis, District Clerk, P. O. Blackwood, N. J.

Gentlemen: A letter under date of March 1, 1917, has reached this office asking if it would be inconsistent to inform the Board of Education of Gloucester township that the State Constitution, Article I, Paragraph 4, provides as follows:

No religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust, and no person shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil right merely on account of his religious principles.

The following telegrams form the basis of request:

Miss Helen M. Connolly, 347 North Washington St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Appointed to Blackwood Primary. Salary fifty. Wire acceptance immediately. Must be Protestant. Come at once.

J. F. RUSH.

Miss Connolly telegraphed the information that she was a Catholic. Early the next morning she received another telegram:

Miss Helen Connolly: The board will not elect a member of your denomination. J. F. RUSH.

If the substance of these telegrams is true in fact, then clearly the Board of Education of Gloucester township should be informed of what it apparently is ignorant of, namely: The Board has no right to require a religious test of a person whom they have appointed as a teacher in the schools.

Further, a board of education has no right, under the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, to say as a board that it will not elect an applicant who belongs to this or that religious sect. If the Board of Gloucester township did take such action it is my duty to inform you that it was done in plain violation of the Constitution of the State of New Jersey.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) JOHN ENRIGHT.
Assistant Commissioner of Education, New Jersey.

Certified copies of the original telegrams were supplied to satisfy the doubt implied in the sentence: "If

the substance of these telegrams is true in fact." It will be noticed in the last paragraph of the above letter, it is stated that: "A board of education has no right, under the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, *to say as a board* that it will not elect an applicant who belongs to this or that *religious sect*." (Italics mine.) This would seem to imply that when the supervising principal, Mr. J. F. Rush, who has the selection of teachers in that school district, or individual members of the board might break the State Constitution but "as a board" they must not do so.

After nearly a month's delay Mr. J. E. Mathis, clerk of the Board of Education explained the whole matter in the following letter:

MARTIN SCHUBERT, President DANIEL TURNER, Vice-President

GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
J. E. MATHIS, Clerk

Blackwood, N. J., 3rd, 31st, 1917.

MR. JOHN ENRIGHT,
Asst. Commissioner of Education,
Trenton, N. J.

Dear Sir:

Yours of March 6th, in reference to the employment of Miss Helen M. Connolly as teacher in the primary department of the Blackwood school, was duly received, I did not understand that it called for an answer. The telegrams of which you sent me a copy were sent by Mr. Rush, but entirely without the Board's knowledge or instruction as the Board is unaware that it is unconstitutional to oppose the election of any person as teacher in the public schools on account of any peculiar religious belief.

I am expressing the sentiment of the entire Board as well as that of Mr. Rush when I say that we regret very much the gross injustice done Miss Connolly. But to a certain extent excusable from the fact that Mr. Rush took for granted that

because there was no Catholic schools and very few pupils in the district the Board would prefer a Protestant teacher.

Trusting this explanation will be satisfactory,

I am very truly yours,

JOSEPH E. MATHIS,
District Clerk.

It will be noted that Mr. Mathis, the clerk of the Board of Education states clearly one reason for the injustice to Miss Connolly when he says: "*as the Board is unaware that it is unconstitutional to oppose the election of any person as teacher in the public schools on account of any religious belief.*" But the School Law of the State of New Jersey, Article 1, begins: "The general supervision and control of public instruction shall be vested in a State Board of Education."

So the State Board of Education was asked to: "Make a ruling that will govern all boards of education in the State and forbid them inquiring as to the religion of an applicant for any position at their disposal, as the question is unconstitutional." The reply to this request was that the matter would be taken up by the State Board. So it was turned over to an "advisory committee" of the State Board of Education and that committee reported as follows:

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

*Report of the Advisory Committee on Certain Discriminations
Against Teachers Because of Their Religious Faith.*

It has been brought to the attention of the Advisory Committee twice within the last six weeks that certain school boards, through their acting officers, have been discriminating against candidates for teaching positions on the ground that they were of a religious faith objectionable to members of the respective school communities where application was made.

In one of these cases a teacher was appointed by telegram, and the appointment canceled by telegram upon learning that the teacher belonged to an unacceptable denomination. Upon enquiry by the Advisory Committee it developed that neither the President nor the District Clerk of the School Board knew anything about the telegrams. They expressed their surprise and regret at the circumstances. The Supervising Principal of the District admitted that he had sent the telegrams of his own volition, that he was responsible for them, that he had exceeded his authority, and that he was sorry for it.

In the second case, the complaint came from a teacher-applicant that she was sent, from the district where she applied, a blank to be filled out which contained questions as to what church she was a member of and what church she attended. That blank is in the possession of your advisory committee, and the matter is still pending owing to letters that have not yet been answered.

It is not necessary, however, to await the closing of this case before saying positively and emphatically that these practices, wherever they arise and whomsoever they effect, are diametrically opposed to the Constitution of the State which forbids any discrimination because of religious faith. Such discriminations are against the spirit of our institutions and are especially harmful in our school system. It is to be hoped that by the adoption of this memorandum report the State Board of Education will serve notice upon the school men and the School Boards of the State that it deprecates such discriminations, and will do everything in its power to discountenance and discourage them.

Your Committee suggests that in adopting this report the State Board of Education will authorize the publication of it in the Education Bulletin issued by the Department of Education so that it may be brought to the attention of all the School Boards and school men in the State.

(Signed) JOHN C. VAN DYKE,
Chairman Advisory Committee.

Mr. John C. Van Dyke wrote that "the State Board of Education at its meeting in Trenton on May 5 adopted my report in the matter of discrimination against teachers

on the grounds of religion," but added: "We have no authority to compel observation of the resolution." So the State Board of Education of New Jersey which has "the general supervision of public instruction" refuses to pass a resolution compelling boards of education to obey the Constitution of the State and in the resolution which they do pass in which they "deprecate such discriminations" the chairman of the committee says: "We have no power to compel observation of the resolution." A teacher in the State of New Jersey therefore can still be discriminated against on religious grounds, but should the person so discriminated against be a child, the School Law, Article IX, Section 125, provides:

No child between the age of four and twenty years shall be excluded from any public school on account of his or her religion, nationality or color. A member of a board of education who shall vote to exclude from any public school any such child, on account of his or her religion, nationality or color shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and punished by a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than two hundred and fifty dollars, or by imprisonment in the county jail, work-house or penitentiary of the county in which the offense shall be committed, for not less than thirty days or more than six months, or by both fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has settled this question for ever and similar action should be taken by every State over which the Stars and Stripes waves:

GENERAL ACT, Chap. 84, approved March 17, 1917.

Section I. It shall be unlawful for any public school committee or official to inquire concerning, or to require or solicit from an applicant for a position in the public schools any information as to the religious belief, creed or practice, or as to the political opinions or affiliations of the applicant; and no appointment to such a position shall be made, withheld or in any manner affected by the said considerations.

Section II. Violation of the provisions of this act shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars for each offense.

The Catholics of New Jersey will doubtless watch with keen interest the next attempt made by any of the School Boards in the State to impose an unconstitutional religious test on applicants for the post of teachers in the public schools.

Catholics and the War

THE RT. REV. HENRY MOELLER, D.D., ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINNATI.

ON last Friday while the whole Christian World, bowed down in mournful penance and wrapped in deepest sorrow for the death of its Redeemer, listened once again to His most touching pleading of mercy for His cruel persecutors, the esteemed President of the United States, evidently compelled by most urgent and cogent reasons, proclaimed, that in spite of all diplomacy, a state of open war had arisen between our much beloved country and the Imperial Government of Germany. There was no undue haste nor deliberate forcing of the issue for any selfish reason. The President made this most momentous utterance as head of our great Republic, after Congress, composed of representatives chosen by the people, had given the matter thoughtful and careful consideration. Therefore it is our plain duty as loyal citizens to accept most heartily and to approve consistently what the President and Congress have seen fit to decree in regard to our present attitude towards Ger-

many. Their commanding position enables them to take a clearer and more comprehensive view of the complex situation than private citizens can possibly possess; they no doubt are in possession of compelling facts and see impending dangers ahead which justify their open declaration of war. Moreover, our diplomats, our representatives and members of Congress, the flower of American citizenship, necessarily have at heart the best interest of our common country; and their genuine and unselfish patriotism no one can dare call in question. This knowledge of their worth and patriotism makes our duty of obedience in this perilous moment responsive and whole-hearted.

Catholic theology clearly inculcates that civil authority must be obeyed and respected in all matters that pertain to its appointed province. When it speaks and commands, we may not countervene it, unless it is most plain that the State exacts what is contrary to God's law. The presumption that the civil power is duly exercising its rights is always in its favor; and hence, as long as we are not certain that its demands are manifestly unjust and sinful, we should loyally and conscientiously obey. If we fail in this whole-hearted obedience we rashly resist the ordinance of God Himself: "There is no power," says St. Paul, "but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation." *Rom. 13, 1-2.*

We with many of our fellow-citizens hoped most fervently that our country would not become involved in this world-wide and most sanguinary tragedy of nations; but Divine Providence has ordained otherwise. The testing time has now come when we must put aside our per-

sonal and private views, and united in a solid phalanx generously assist in carrying out the national designs of our Government. For our religion most clearly teaches us the noble duty of patriotism at the cost of every sacrifice. So let us be loyal to our country, faithful to the national emblem; and put forth our best efforts that it may continue to wave gracefully and gloriously over "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

The Catholics in Germany, the Catholics in England, the Catholics in France, in Italy, in Austria, have during this awful crisis been true to the flags of their respective countries; and the Catholics of the United States, ever loyal in the past, will also now stand unitedly by the Stars and Stripes. Then in God's name let all render whatever service they can to their country in this most critical hour. Our hearts go out in tenderest sympathy to the young men who will be actively engaged in this bloody conflict. We paternally ask them to make their peace with God by cleansing their souls from all defilement in the Sacrament of Penance. The great St. Thomas of Aquin intimates that soldiers, who in the state of grace and for love of God and country, suffer and shed their blood, are entitled to the martyr's crown. This wholesome thought will assuredly sustain and inspire them to endure hardships, danger and death with brave and courageous hearts.

There is, however, another aspect of war, which must not be lost sight of. We cannot deny the evident fact that war is a terrible calamity, a fearful scourge with which God visits mankind. This stubborn fact is the sad burden of all history, sacred and profane. It is most patent to any one, who is at all familiar with the Sacred Scriptures. This knowledge is also impressed upon us

by the Church, for in her Litany of the Saints, when fervently imploring God to free us from various afflictions, she asks most insistently. "From pestilence, famine and war, deliver us O Lord." The same is also evident from the heart-rending circumstances that attend war. Some of these are graphically referred to by Benedict XV in his fervent prayer for peace: "Pity the countless mothers in anguish for the fate of their sons, pity the numberless families now bereaved of their fathers, pity Europe over which broods such havoc and disaster."

Undoubtedly then, war in itself is an oft-deserved and dreadful punishment. But providentially it may also result in many blessings. War generally is a rigorous scourge in the hand of God, to chasten His sinful and rebellious subjects for the purpose of inducing them to repent of their disobedience to His law. A righteous father uses the rod to punish his obstinate son; the latter indeed smarts under this parental chastisement, but that will bring about his necessary and desired amendment. The Heavenly Father also sends affliction upon mankind in punishment for their transgressions. Because all flesh had corrupted its way, God sent the deluge to wipe from the face of the earth all mankind excepting Noah and his family. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from heaven for the debasing and shameful sins of their people. And must we not candidly admit that we have much reason to fear some impending chastisement? How little reverence for God! How little regard for His Commandments! How many persons act and live as if there were no God! Sunday, the Lord's day, is made a day of amusement, of pleasure-seeking, of crimes of the darkest dye, instead of being a day chiefly dedicated to the service of God. How little regard for

parental, civil and ecclesiastical authority! What utter disregard for the sacred marriage bond! Divorces are multiplying at a fearful rate despite the solemn inhibition of the Lord: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." What horrible and unmentionable crimes too often defile the holy and sacred matrimonial state! Iniquitous efforts to control the birth-rate, infanticide, onanism and similar crimes are unblushingly committed, although manifestly against God's law. Drunkenness is bringing ruin to soul and body, is disrupting families and destroying homes. How few strictly obey the salutary injunction of St. Paul: "Live soberly, justly and piously in this world."

There is no denying the fact that we are guilty of many and grievous offences. And hence have we not grave reason to fear that even now the avenging hand of God may be heavy upon us in the present war? By prayer and penance the inhabitants of Ninive averted the just anger of God. If we imitate their inspiring example the Lord will undoubtedly show us the same compassionate mercy. Let us turn away effectively from sin, and return with our whole heart to God; let us make amends for our repeated injuries and insults to Him. Repentance and conversion manifested in our daily lives should be one of the salutary consequences of the war; and moreover our repentance may mercifully incline Almighty God to avert from our country the consequences of a disastrous war.

The United States is a strong and influential nation, rich in varied resources, but no one will foolishly claim that she is invincible. Powerful complications may arise, foreign combinations may be formed that would spell ruin to our nation. The weakest power sustained by God

will subdue the most potent, devoid of Divine help. David conquered Goliath; Constantine, Maxentius; a handful of Christians utterly defeated the powerful Turks at Lepanto; because God was with them. Let us therefore in this fateful crisis, obtain help from above by leading a holy, virtuous and mortified life, so that by sincere repentance and true obedience to God's law we may obtain mercy and seasonable aid. The Church in her prayer for peace couples these needful blessings with the faithful observance of God's Commandments.

The foregoing considerations brought home to us forcibly by the present war have inspired us, Dearly Beloved Brethren, to urge you to be instant in prayer, to cleanse your soul from sin, to make amends for your repeated faults. For the securing of this desired object we have deemed it advisable to prescribe certain public prayers and additional spiritual exercises. We therefore direct:

(1) That the prayers which we have already prescribed to be said after Low Mass and during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament be continued, and not too readily omitted.

(2) That on the First Sunday of May the clergy, the laity and religious be in their respective churches and chapels from three to four o'clock in the afternoon to supplicate Almighty God for the enlightenment and guidance of the rulers of our nation in this most momentous crisis; for the saving of our country from being plunged into the engulfing abyss of disaster; and for the merciful ending of this gigantic conflict of peoples and nations, so that the world may again enjoy that universal peace which prevailed when the Prince of Peace was born.

(3) That pastors begin the hour of prayer by read-

ing this pastoral letter to the beginning of this paragraph; then they will expose the Blessed Sacrament, and after the choir has sung the *O Salutaris Hostia*, they will recite the beads, the Litany of the Saints and the enclosed prayer for the authorities. Thereupon will intervene silent prayer until twenty minutes to four o'clock. Then the choir will sing the *Miserere*, after which the pastors will recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and the prayer for peace of our Holy Father, Benedict XV. The *Tantum Ergo* will follow with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Praises and the *Laudate Pueri*.

(4) That every Sunday the priest who delivers the sermon at the principal Mass will recite in the pulpit, slowly and distinctly, the prayer for the authorities.

(5) That during the week preceding the First Sunday of May the Faithful go to Confession; that the pastors give them every facility for this purpose; and that on the First Sunday of May all who possibly can do so receive Holy Communion.

(6) We strongly recommend that the Saturday preceding the First Sunday of May be observed as a day of fast and abstinence. . . .

May God bless and preserve our country; may He enlighten and guide its rulers; and may He infuse into the hearts of its people dutiful respect, loyal obedience, and filial devotion.

✠ HENRY MOELLER,
Archbishop of Cincinnati.

Given at Cincinnati, the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, April 25th, 1917.

Modesty in Dress

MARY NOLAN (MRS. O'NOLAN)

From the "Irish Monthly."

ON the surface, what topic appears so inherently frivolous as that of feminine fashions? Yet, if we probe beneath the surface, we find there are serious questions involved. There is in reality a close connection between *modes et mœurs*. This fact has been insisted upon by several philosophical writers who have not disdained to discuss the ethics of dress; and it has also been dealt with by great theologians at widely separated epochs of the Church's history. The homilies on the subject by Sts. Jerome, Augustine and John Chrysostom find an echo in our times in the decrees relating to dress issued by Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius X. The importance of the subject has been also recognized by one of the most representative bodies of organized Catholic opinion in the world, the International Federation of Catholic Women's Leagues. At the congress held in Vienna, in 1912, of this great international federation, the question of women's dress was exhaustively discussed by the delegates of the seventeen countries and of the many associations represented there. In addition to the women present of every rank in life, from archduchesses to trade unionists, and belonging to so many different nations, there was also present a delegate specially nominated by the Holy See as its representative, so that the gathering was, from the Catholic point of view, one deserving of serious attention. Whatever this Congress discussed should not be beneath our dignity to consider.

The Baroness de Montenach, who read a lengthy paper on the subject, explained that at the International Catholic Women's Congress, held in Madrid the previous year, the matter had been first mooted. It had been then decided to institute a searching inquiry into all the whys and wherefore of dress, and this inquiry had been left in the hands of the Swiss Catholic Women's League. This latter League presented the report to the International Congress at Vienna through the Baroness de Montenach, and when she had read her paper the cosmopolitan gathering assembled discussed it thoroughly. The report of these proceedings is amazingly interesting. One cannot read it without realizing what an important rôle fashion plays in our lives, and how many-sided is its influence. Unhappily this influence is often an evil one.

Three facts emerged from discussion at this International Congress. Modern fashions are often indecent, often injurious to health, and almost always extravagant. The question which confronts Christian womanhood is how to combat these tendencies, and how to appear suitably and becomingly attired, for dowdiness is by no means to be praised. Eccentricity is always objectionable, whether it aims at the extreme of smartness or the extreme of dowdiness. St. Francis de Sales is credited with saying to one of his penitents, who probably thought there was a subtle connection between devotion and frumpishness, that he wished her to be *bien mise*. The Comtesse de Rochefoucauld, writing some years ago in *L'Echo de la Ligue Patriotique des Françaises*, declared with admirable good sense that "A Catholic woman should be able to make herself recognized by her appearance being more irreproachable and less eccentric than

that of all others." She added: "A Catholic Leaguer ought to have a great dignity in her life, and this dignity ought to be observable in her air. Make yourselves apostles of good taste." These sayings and many similar ones quoted at the Congress prove the sensible, moderate tone adopted. There was nothing narrow or extreme in the views urged. Comfort and beauty were sought for frankly, even elegance and distinction were admitted to be desirable under certain circumstances. The only features found fault with in fashion were those which offended modesty, or which injured health, or those which, by their excessive cost, caused people to spend more on their wardrobe than they could afford. It is grievous to find that those grave causes of offence exist largely in the fashions of today adopted by the women of Europe, not only in non-Christian and nominally Christian society, but among circles of professedly devout Catholics.

At the German Catholic Congress, held at Aix-la-Chapelle, Professor Mausbach, having addressed a passionate protest to the Congress on the subject of the silly and vicious fashions prevailing, wound up by a moving allusion to the Constantine Fêtes which were being held that year. He evoked the memory of the Empress Helena, who found at the summit of Calvary, on the spot where the Cross of the Saviour of the world had been erected, a statue of Venus. "It is again a statue of Venus which, by insidious plotting, the corrupters and destroyers of Christian civilization wish to erect instead of the Cross. It is she whom they wish to see adored by the masses, given over once more to the practices of paganism. It is the duty of Catholics to prevent the success of this formidable conspiracy, or at least to cease to act as accomplices in it." Certainly, these are solemn

words which may well make the most thoughtless of us pause before we follow blindly in fashion's footsteps.

Among the striking items of information brought to light at the International Congress was the fact that the leading fashion-houses in Paris and other great Continental cities are almost all in the hands of Jews and Free-masons: Masons, of course, of the Grand Orient, that is to say, of an anti-Christian type. The delegates did not hesitate to affirm that the originators of objectionable modes were trying deliberately to de-Christianize society. There is nothing far-fetched in the supposition. As one of the speakers remarked: This is what is to be expected from implacable enemies of our Faith. But what is to be said of Christian, Catholic women who cooperate in this infamous design by slavishly following every mode decreed by these tyrannical fashion-makers? Such monstrosities as slit skirts, glove-tight costumes, and very décolleté costumes worn out of doors, have not only been adopted by Catholic women, but they have even approached the altar so attired. A number of prelates in different Continental countries have had the painful duty of referring to this scandal. Among those who have spoken strongly of it in pastoral letters are the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, the Archbishops of Genoa and Lucca, and the Bishop of Pamiers. The last-named prelate refers to the existence of an odd abuse in his diocese, the appearance of women bare-headed in church, contrary to the Pauline precept: "Every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered disgraceth herself, for it is all one as if she were shaven. . . . You yourselves judge, doth it become a woman to pray to God uncovered." *I Cor. 11:13.*

Another curious fact unearthed at the Congress was, that feminine fashion-makers are for the most part men. Perhaps this accounts for the unsuitable nature of many modes. If the designers had to wear their designs they might not be so quick to invent uncomfortable or injurious fashions such as the tight corsets of the "wasp-waist" era. It does seem certainly a topsy-turvy arrangement for men to act as arbiters in such an exclusively feminine realm. One can imagine what weird masculine fashions would be evolved if women were responsible for them. But men would scarcely bow so abjectly to fashion's decrees in that case. The meekest of mere men seems to have more independence than the most emancipated of new women when it is a case of fashion's sway.

The Hierarchy of Spain recently urged the women of their flocks to adhere to the beautiful national costume of wearing, when attending religious ceremonies in church, the traditional lace mantilla; and it is gratifying to learn that the request has met with a good response. The Spanish mantilla is undoubtedly one of the most graceful and dignified head-dresses ever invented, and has the additional merit of not blocking the view of the altar to those sitting behind the wearer, as hats of cart-wheel dimensions do. We all know, too, that graceful drapery round the head and face is much more becoming than any hat that ever came forth from *la Rue de la Paix*. Look at a shawled *cailin* in the Gaeltacht, and compare her to her returned emigrant sister dressed à *l'Américaine*. Which of the two looks the comelier? Or, think of the transformation in the looks of a coifed nun whom one has known as a girl "in the world." In order to become beautiful and remain young for ever, it is much more efficacious to enter a convent than to go to a "beauty doctor"!

Leo XIII, whose master-mind seemed to sweep over every field of human activity, did not omit to deal with this question of dress. He caused a code to be drawn up embodying "Instructions to Christian Women on Fashion." In these instructions, divided into eight heads, a complete guide is to be found for votaries of fashion as to the directions in which it is permissible to go. While Leo XII spoke in general terms of fashion, Pius X confined his instructions to a particular instance. He issued to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Vatican the command that in future ladies were not to wear *grand décolletage*, costumes called *de gala* or *di corte*, at receptions at which church dignitaries were to be present. From all of which it will be seen that the Church has been as vigilant in recent times in dealing with this problem as in the days of the early Fathers when Jerome wrote to Paula and Eustochium, or in the days of St. Louis of France, who gave sound advice to his son, Philippe, regarding the happy medium to be employed, "*Quand il se pare en vêtements et en armoure.*"

The speakers at the Catholic Women's International Congress laid stress on the fact that in no domain does the Church find greater difficulty in securing compliance with her wishes than in this realm of fashion. Women who yield her an unquestioning obedience on all other points, and who lead in other respects exemplary lives, rebel when it is a case of being "out of fashion." The edicts of some Jewish or Grand Orient *costumier* or *modiste* will be implicitly obeyed, no matter how ridiculous or extravagant is the mode imposed, no matter even if it border perilously on the indecent. One of the French delegates remarked that in this matter there is nothing to distinguish between a pious, practical Christian and one who is not. In both equally is to be found an extraordin-

ary aberration with regard to *les convenances*. The delegate added: "But women and girls who give themselves to good works and devotional practices are more reprehensible than others when, despite their high ideals, they lower themselves by copying objectionable fashions. Sometimes one sees in the church pious (!) young girls who cannot genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament on account of the tightness of their skirts." (This was when hobble-skirts were the rage). M. Gabriel Prévost, who published in a French journal in 1903 a learned article on "*La Physiologie de la mode dans le costume*," concludes his thesis with this declaration:

In the midst of all the women who throng our theaters, our race-courses, our places of reunion, it would require a very discriminating eye to discern under the medley of cuts and colors the woman who is *du monde* and the woman who is *du demi-monde*. . . . Equality is the spirit of the age and equality in eccentricity, as in all else. . . . The only inequality which exists is that of fortune. . . . Bizarre costumes are worn by all who can pay for them, regardless of convention. . . . A moralist might draw a damaging conclusion from the *décolletage* flaunted in our days. It surpasses greatly that of the time of Louis XV., and seems is if it could scarcely go lower. . . . We are living in a decadent age.

Apart from actually vicious tendencies observable frequently in modern feminine fashions, the rage for extravagance in dress is a feature of the twentieth century. Economists as well as moralists have, therefore, been taking Dame Fashion to task. They point out that society from top to bottom is being injured by this extravagance. The middle classes outdo the aristocracy, plutocrats spend more than royalty, and the women of the people try to follow in hot haste on the heels of the bourgeoisie. The result of this feverish competition is ruinous to all but the very rich. Early marriages grow

fewer and fewer, and when marriages do take place, homes are often broken up amid misery owing to the curse of extravagance. Both with men and women extravagance is the bane of the age. Love of luxury was one of the symptoms of decadence which society presented before this terrible war broke out. Perhaps the fiery furnace through which Europe is now passing may, with unspeakable pain and suffering, restore simpler and saner standards of living. But while men and women have been equally guilty of extravagance, woman, when she errs in this direction, usually does so on the score of dress. It is to her, therefore, that appeals have been addressed by the publicists who have written of late years on the economic as well as the ethical aspect of fashion. In France, Messieurs Gabriel Prévost, Paul Adam, De Laundy, Coffignon, and Charles Blanc; in Germany, Doctors Mausbach, Memnel, and A. Mohrhutte; in Belgium, H. Van de Welde; and in England, William Morris, are among the foremost of those who have raised a note of warning, and implored women, for the sake of the future of the race, to stem the tide of reckless expenditure. The political views of those writers range from Conservatism to Socialism, and different schools of religious thought as well as different races are represented by them; but on one point all are agreed: society is confronted by a serious menace in the fashions of today. How strange that intelligent beings should pay so little heed to the entreaties of great thinkers in Church and State, while they follow blindly some obscure fashion-maker.

Still stranger does this "aberration," as M. Prévost calls it, appear, when we remember that some of the fashions which obtained the greatest vogue originated in a deformity of some great lady or of some notorious

character, who, in order to conceal her physical defect, invented some peculiarity of dress. For instance, in France, the daughters of Louis IX having enormous feet, invented long-trained skirts. The wife of Phillippe III, whose neck was of a length out of all proportion, invented high collars. Madame de Pompadour, who was short, brought high heels into vogue. Could anything be more preposterous than the spectacle of some lady of irreproachable character, who happened to be tall, adding to her already too abundant inches by wearing high-heeled shoes because a woman of notorious reputation happened to be small and wanted to increase her height by this device? Is not this the limit of ignominy?

One of the writers on the philosophy of dress, the learned M. Blanc, divides the history of humanity into two distinct periods: (1) The epochs in which women dress themselves in wide, flowing garments and prefer horizontal lines; (2) the epochs in which the figure of woman presents an excessive predominance of the vertical line. In other words, clinging garments *à la* hobble-skirt. He maintains that the first system indicates reasonable tranquil and home-keeping customs; that the horizontal line is the sign of the happy ages when women know how to remain quiet and dignified. On the other hand, he asserts that the vertical line is the characteristic trait of those epochs in which women can no longer remain quietly in one place, in which she must rush feverishly from one distraction to another, and get rid of everything which impedes her restless movements. We are in full swing, nowadays, of the reign of the vertical line, and the general upheaval in the feminine world which accompanied its introduction gives some color to M. Blanc's curious theory. . . .

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